UC Pulse

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

This time of year, the University of California's motto of Fiat Lux, or "let there be light," feels especially pertinent. UC President James B. Milliken was in Sweden for Nobel Week just last week, and the light that UC brings to the world through scientific discovery was abundantly clear. UC faculty and staff have won 75 Nobel Prizes, more than any other university system in the country. There's no doubt UC is a scientific and Nobel winning powerhouse -- and it's taken a lot of hard work and long partnerships with the federal government to make such essential research happen.

UC's values of entrepreneurialism, innovation, influential scholarship, research opportunity and impact reflect the spirit and ambition of the Golden State and the country we seek to serve. As we close out the year, I'm proud of UC's record-breaking Nobel accomplishments, as well as UC's status as the nation's best public university and best value in higher education. In all these ways and so many more, UC is bringing light to every corner of the state.

The University's impact can be felt in so many different ways, like in a new method for faster and safer intubation, developed at UC Santa Barbara with funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF). In early tests, 100% of providers had the intubation device working within seconds -- a critical development in emergency situations, when seconds save lives. UC's impact can also be seen in far-flung places like Mars, where two newly launched spacecraft, Blue and Gold, will pioneer mapping to safeguard astronaut communication and survival on the planet. With funding from NASA, the project came in at one-tenth of the cost of the agency's previous interplanetary missions. And UC's impact can be felt in communities across California, whether through stories of life-saving cancer care, the use of GPS in everyday life or the power of a UC education, the University of California is changing lives for the better.

Hear directly from President Milliken as he reflects on 2025 and what's ahead for the University.

Wishing you all a happy holiday season and a joyous New Year.

*- **Chris Harrington,** UC Associate Vice President, Federal Governmental Relations*

What We're Watching

1.

Rare earth minerals from an unlikely source
UC Davis researchers are developing a bio-based process using AI to extract rare earth elements from acidic mine and industrial wastewater, turning a byproduct into valuable components for magnets, lasers and many of the other modern technologies on which we rely. The project is federally funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy's Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E) as part of an initiative to reduce American dependence on critical mineral imports by establishing new and secure domestic supply chains.

2.

Helping Parkinson's patients walk
Using AI and deep brain stimulation, researchers at UCSF have found a way to help meaningfully improve how people with Parkinson's can walk, without worsening other symptoms. The National Institutes of Health (NIH)-supported research team is hopeful this development can ultimately improve mobility and reduce falls.

3.

Keeping California farming strong
Meet Tracy Schohr, an alum of UC's 4-H program that engages youth in activities related to agriculture, livestock and food, supported by federal funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Schohr has a master's degree from UC Davis and is now a UC Cooperative Extension

livestock and natural resources advisor, bringing her experience and expertise to California's farming communities to expand the agricultural workforce and working alongside ranchers in Plumas, Sierra and Butte counties.

4.

Big breakthroughs in Alzheimer's research
Alzheimer's affects 10% of people over 65 and kills more people each year than breast cancer and prostate cancer combined. For decades, it's been hard to diagnose and impossible to treat. But all that's changing now with UC researchers at the forefront of these life-saving discoveries, made possible by federal research funding from the NIH, that are bringing us closer than ever before to understanding and treating the disease.

5.

UC researchers cited most in worldwide rankings
Researchers from the University of California are officially the most cited according to the 2025 Highly Cited Researchers List. The rankings recognize scientists from across UC's 10 campuses and three national laboratories as some of the most influential thinkers in their fields, clinching the top spot for UC as the #1 institution for highly cited researchers worldwide.

Did You Know?

The University of California admitted its largest class of California first-year students in 2025, topping 100,000.

A majority of UC's low-income students earn more than their parents within five years of graduating.

UC broke a Nobel Prize record in 2025 when five UC-affiliated scholars were awarded prizes, more than any other institution in a single year.

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